

# Strategies to Address Cross-Program Themes

January 2009

Cross program themes address specific elements that are important in the daily life of schools; improved student achievement, improved teacher quality, high quality professional development, expanded opportunities for the use and integration of technology into the curriculum, and the allocation of resources brought together in an integrated, comprehensive design.

In this initial five-year plan, we have included the Cecil County Public Schools' description of these programs. These programs are each represented elsewhere in the Strategic Plan as well, but we have included these summaries here, with admitted redundancy, to fit the outline for the Plan provided by Appendix C; Local Planning Team Handbook for the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan.

- Title I School Support
- Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities
- Teacher Quality and Capacity
- Fine Arts Initiative
- Education That is Multicultural
- Challenge/Gifted and Talented Education
- Educational Technology
- English Language Acquisition

**Program**

**School Support**

**Contact Person**

**Ms. Cynthia Ward, Coordinator for Title I & Academic Intervention**

**Program Description**

**1. Support and Assistance**

High quality, sustained, supplemental support to public and private Title I students is provided for Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Title I programs through district level coordination of services. Programs are supported by reservation funds (including Instructional Support Teachers and Home School Advisors) and school allocations, determined by free/reduced meal percentages. Research-based program strategies are chosen by each school and are presented for peer review in June of each school year, as instructional proposals for the following school year. Peer review is also used to monitor the data from each school, as their team reports twice a year on progress in eliminating the achievement gap for each subgroup.

All schools receive support in meeting academic content standards through the professional development provided by full time school-based Instructional Support Teachers (ISTs) – one at each non-Title I school and two at each Title I school. All content area coordinators provide the district level inservice for ISTs, in their preparation for school based and countywide staff development. The supplemental programming at Title I schools allows them to expand this support through a wide variety of strategies – e.g. smaller class sizes, extended day programming, and mentors for at-risk students.

At this time [2008-09 school year] the system does not have any Title I schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. If in subsequent years, schools are identified for corrective action/restructuring, the system leadership will determine if it is necessary to replace the staff. If management authority at the school level needs to be supported or reorganized that will happen. The district will organize support through the school improvement process. The Title I Coordinator will serve on that school's improvement team, identifying needs, initiatives, and implementation responsibilities. The curriculum will not be changed - it is already based on scientific research. Meaningful professional development will be determined after data is gathered from "learning walks." Title I funds will be set-aside for this purpose. Academic intervention opportunities will be made available. Strategies to promote effective parent involvement and mentoring of new teachers will accelerate.

## **2. Parent Notification – Schools Identified for Corrective Action**

Parents will be informed of the school's status immediately. The district will continue to offer school choice and make available supplemental educational services to eligible students enrolled in the school. Parent involvement during this phase is an essential requirement. Parents will understand through participation in decision-making, frequent meetings and written communication the constant status of improvement efforts.

## **3. Parent Notification – Choice & Supplemental Services**

If the time arises when the Cecil County Public School System is required to provide parents with school choice and/or supplemental services, these options will be coordinated at the district level. NCLB guidelines will be followed, with thorough parent information about each school transfer option and/or supplemental service provider. There will be at least two choices for transfer preference. As funds allow, all students in the Title I schools identified for improvement will be offered the choices, with priority given to the lowest-achieving low-income students. Written notification will be sent home to parents stating that their child's school has been identified for improvement under Title I. This written communication will include information about the school choice options and supplemental services available to them. Meeting dates will be announced when parents can learn about the alternate schools and the tutoring providers. These meetings will take place prior to the beginning of the next school year. If these options are required, twenty percent of the district's Title I allocation will be reserved for funding transportation and supplemental services.

## **4. Parent Notification – Staff Qualifications**

In Title I schools, parents are notified in the first school newsletter (Sept.-Oct.) that they have the right to request information about their child's teacher and/or paraprofessional. District level letters, with a template form for specifics about each individual, are available for schools to use in response to a parent's request for staff qualifications, or due to the automatic triggering of notification. This information, consistent with NCLB, is provided for four circumstances:

- Provisional teacher
- Tenured teacher
- Four consecutive week teacher
- Paraprofessional

## **5. Schoolwide Program Achievement**

Each schoolwide program will report achievement results by student subgroup at the two peer review presentations. Each school is responsible to document the scientific research based strategies that are being implemented. Funds are used to hire extra teachers to lower class size and to remediate the lowest readers, to provide instructional support through paraprofessionals, to operate before/after school programs (math and reading), and to hire substitutes for staff development. Family Literacy programs are in place at the seven elementary schools.

**Program**

**Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities**

**Contact Person**

**Jennifer Steczak, Health Education Resource Teacher**

**Program Description**

The Cecil County's Public Schools Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program is a vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol, tobacco use, and violence through education and prevention activities. It is the school systems intent to free all schools of drugs, violence, the unauthorized presence of firearms, and offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. All of our initiatives are coordinated with other appropriate federal, state, and local community efforts and resources.

**Comprehensive strategies for drug and violence prevention that focus on the following program components:**

**1. Policy**

The Cecil County Public Schools has policies for the following:

- a. Use Of Or Possession Of Any Tobacco Product
- b. Student Conduct: Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs (Conduct)
- c. Student Conduct: Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs (Possession, Use, Sale or Distribution )
- d. Student Conduct: Gun-Free School
- e. Student Conduct: Student Behavior Which Has Taken Place off School Property
- f. Use of Personal Electronic Devices in School

**2. K-12 Prevention Curriculum**

- a. K- 5 Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Education (ATOD) is taught through the process of integration. Classroom teachers use a locally written curriculum to match the proposed MSDE Health Education VSC. Teachers have Meeks-Heit and Health Wave texts available as resources to supplement lessons.
- b. Student receive ATOD prevention education through required health education classes in grades 6-8 and are required to complete one credit of health in HS. This includes Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) in grade 6 and Project Alert (Scientifically based ATOD prevention program) in grades 7 and 8. High school students receive county generated curriculum.
- c. Students in grades 10-12 receive ATOD prevention lessons integrated within content subjects and assembly programs.

**3. Early Identification and Intervention**

Cecil County Public Schools currently have Maryland Student Assistance Program (MSAP) teams in all of our middle and high schools. New members are added as needed. All new members attend the 2 day new member training offered by the Maryland Student Assistance Program Professionals Association.

**4. Peer Leadership and Support**

CCPS is looking to revise its Peer Leadership program. In the past guidance counselors have had a central training and then run programs in each school. Currently, we are planning ways to increase the number of students involved in the programs and make the training as up to date as possible.

**5. Community and Family Connections  
Comprehensive Youth Strategies Plans**

CCPS have combined the above two strategies because the Director of Student Services sits on the planning board of our Local Management Board. The school system works very closely with the LMB with providing grants and programs for the community and families. The LMB has recently completed the Youth Strategies Plan and is in the process of implementation.

**6. Research Based Behavioral Programs**

CCPS now has 5 schools and the alternative education program using the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program to create a safer and more productive learning environment. We have added 3 additional schools in the 08-09 school year.

**Program**

**Teacher Capacity and Quality**

**Contact  
Person**

**Mr. Robert Davis, Executive Director for Human Resources  
Mrs. Stacey Rakaczky, Coordinator for Performance Excellence**

**Program  
Description**

Cecil County Public Schools are provided with high quality teachers by a comprehensive recruitment and retention effort. Recruitment efforts are comprised of four major components:

1. Employee Acquisition
2. Employment Incentives
3. Employee Development
4. Program Assessment

Employee acquisition includes aggressive recruitment at colleges, universities, and consortia. On-line application procedures have been implemented. Contracts are offered early in the recruiting process to highly qualified candidates in special needs areas.

Employment incentives include providing salaries, wages, benefits and working conditions commensurate with those school systems with which we compete. Also included are such efforts as assisting with moving expenses and providing equitable teaching assignments for first and second year teachers. Favorable lease/loan arrangements for vehicles and lease arrangements for apartments for new teachers are also being explored.

Employee development is highlighted by such activities as support for Future Teacher Clubs, Grow Our Own program, and implementation of a professional development school program with local colleges and universities. Staff development is conducted consistent with Maryland Standards for Professional Development (2004).

Program assessment of recruitment efforts is achieved from analysis of data relating to teacher supply and demand, salary and benefits. Recruitment at consortia and on-line application procedures are also evaluated for effectiveness. Leading data from new teacher feedback surveys is collected and analyzed throughout the year to determine professional needs. Lagging data is also received from New Teacher Roundtable discussions at the end of the school year to evaluate CCPS efforts to support new teachers. All data is used to adjust and refine the support available to new teachers.

Retention efforts are multi-faceted. A mentoring program is in place for first and second year teachers to support them during what can be an intense transition time. Third year non-tenure status provision is used when needed. As was mentioned above, equitable teaching assignments are assured for new teachers. Employees are recognized and rewarded for excellence and longevity in the profession by activities such as the 25-30 year service recognition banquet and the CCPS Teacher of the Year Program. Continuous professional growth is encouraged by activities such as tuition reimbursement and providing on-site and local graduate and post graduate course work.

In an effort to supply CCPS with high quality principals, other administrators and key teaching roles, teachers are provided with skill development opportunities highlighted by the Leadership Academy program, an exploratory course to assist those considering leadership roles.

Analysis of attrition data and information gathered from exit interviews and participant feedback allows for the assessment of the CCPS retention program.

In the area of professional development, CCPS has identified three major needs:

1. Instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.
2. Supporting the academic needs of students with disabilities.
3. Training experienced teachers to be able to provide coaching support in the areas of embedding instructional strategies and integrating new curriculum materials to support district student achievement goals.

CCPS will help to meet the identified needs through two staff development programs:

1. The new teacher mentor program(Goal 3,Obj.3.1, Indicator 3.3a)
2. The “Growth and Learning Academies” for teachers (Goal 3, Obj.3.3).

Each of these programs is designed to provide ongoing professional growth opportunities to enhance classroom instruction that will support student achievement.

**Program**

**Fine Arts**

**Contact Person**

**Dr. C. Nelson Fritts, Jr., Instructional Coordinator for Fine Arts**

**Program Description**

**CURRENT STATUS OF FINE ARTS PROGRAMS**

The Cecil County Public School System recognizes the significance of comprehensive programs in the arts. Over the past nine years, many innovative programs have been developed to embrace all fine arts disciplines--music, art, theatre, and dance. The Instructional Coordinator of Fine Arts, Leadership Team, ArtsReach constituency, and teachers have worked collaboratively to expand and enhance fine arts opportunities for students.

Since 1998, major steps have been taken to develop curricula, assessment, staff development, and instruction to reflect the Essential Learner Outcomes in the Fine Arts. Documents completed to date include General Music K-8, Instrumental Music 4-12, High School Music Electives, Humanities, Dance K-12, Theatre K-12, High School Art, Middle School Art, and K-5 Elementary Art. Formative assessments have been developed for K-8 General Music and Instrumental Music. A pilot summative assessment has been developed for grade 4 and grade 7 General Music. Secondary staff members have developed a pool of assessment questions for each of the high school music electives.

Advancements in the area of technology have been limited to equipment supplied through renovation/construction projects and limited funds through the Fine Arts Initiative Grants, Years 3 and 4. Fourteen out of 28 buildings have been renovated during the past nine years. These facilities are providing updated technology in the fine arts. Within the next five years, a strategic plan will be developed to implement musical instrument digital interface (MIDI), digital imaging, Internet, and other computer-assisted strategies for the classroom.

A variety of electives are available in all arts disciplines at the high school level. These include gifted and talented, advanced placement, and studio classes in all arts. A diverse and constantly growing co-curricular program for art and music provides All County and State honor experiences for students. All County Chorus, Band, Jazz Ensemble, Marching Band, and Solo and Ensemble Festival provide exemplary students experiences beyond their classroom in music. Many students advance to All State choral and instrumental programs. In art, students participate in four to five All County art shows, some of which are juried. Some student works are selected for regional and state competitions. Exemplary art students are also provided experiences at Cecil Community College in taking co-credit courses or special workshops in art portfolio development or digital imaging. Exemplary students in all of the Fine Arts areas can audition and participate in the Upper Chesapeake Summer Center for the Arts, sponsored by the Cecil County Public School system.

Elementary art and music instructors teach classes of approximately 25 students once a week for fifty-minute sessions. Middle school art and music classes are taught within a rotating fine and practical arts block. These sessions usually last one marking period each for music and art. The Instructional Coordinator of Fine Arts, school principals, and dance/theatre resource specialists monitor Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts implementation.

Several years ago, a proactive fine arts advocacy group, ArtsReach, was developed collaboratively among Cecil County Public Schools, Cecil County Arts Council, Cecil Community College, and local arts constituencies. This organization has established yearly goals and has paved the way for innovative programs in the arts. Some of their initiatives have included an annual gala featuring student performers, an annual Children's Concert, enrichment programs throughout the county, collaboration to develop CREATE and Arts Express Grants, expanded arts constituencies, and development of "Instruments from the Attic." ArtsReach works in constant partnership with the Instructional Coordinator of Fine Arts to ensure community involvement and support.

Since the 2006-2007 school year, CCPS has offered a specialist program in the area of Movement/Theater/Physical Education. This new program, Integrated Arts, blends elements of dance, drama and increased physical fitness as a 5<sup>th</sup> "special" subject for all elementary students.

**Program**

**Education That is Multicultural and Achievement (ETMA)**

**Contact Person**

**Mr. Joseph MacDonald, Instructional Coordinator for Social Studies**

**Program Description**

In CCPS, Education That is Multicultural and Achievement (ETMA) has four primary goals:

- A. To infuse information about the history, culture and contributions of diverse populations within society throughout the PreK-12 curriculum (obj.3.3)\*.
- B. To provide rigorous and equitable academic instruction and activities which will enable all students to maximize their potential (obj.1.1)\*.
- C. To provide staff development to promote awareness of the cultural and historical contributions of diverse populations; to encourage the use of a variety of teaching strategies to address student learning styles; and to cultivate human relations skills (obj.3.1)\*.
- D. To select, develop, and disseminate instructional resources to present a multicultural perspective free from stereotypical views and biases and consistent with the purpose of the school system (obj.3.3)\*.

*\*Objective numbers in the CCPS Strategic Plan*

As these goals indicate, ETMA in CCPS is infused into every aspect of the school system and has implications for all three of the system goals in the Strategic Plan. One key strategy for implementing the ETMA program is the work of the system-wide ETMA Liaison Committee. This committee, made up of a representative from every school in the system and chaired by the Instructional Coordinator for Social Studies, is responsible for promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity throughout the system, identifying staff development needs and programs that assist teachers in the delivery of instruction that support the goals of ETMA, and providing training and support needed in the building each liaison represents.

The work of the ETMA Liaison Committee and/or ETMA Steering Committee will have a two pronged focus for the five years of the CCPS Strategic Plan:

- 1. To promote cultural awareness, sensitivity, and respect through the support of school-based programs for cultural heritage recognition programs.
- 2. The county is involved in a multi-year initiative for Inclusive Education in order to foster collaboration and co-teaching to increase the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment in general education classes.

To achieve these goals, the following plans are in place:

- a. Systemic planning at the county and building level to move students to their home school
- b. Plan for the inclusion of all students in targeted grades in participating buildings
- c. Provide professional development and team support to staff
- d. Incorporate best practices in teaching and learning into focused, ongoing professional development
- e. Designing curriculum and instruction for multicultural education and acceleration of student achievement
- f. Establishing culturally supportive learning environments
- g. Advancing educational equity in student assessment and achievement
- h. identifying and selecting bias-free instructional materials

**Program**

**Challenge/ Gifted and Talented Education**

**Contact Person**

**Jean Clark, Program Facilitator for Gifted and Talented Education**

**Program Description**

The Challenge Program in Cecil County is based upon the standards developed by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), *Aiming for Excellence: Gifted Program Standards* and Maryland State Department of Education's Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines, updated 2007.

Students are identified as needing gifted education services through a process of collecting and reviewing a variety of types of data. Information reviewed includes test scores, grades, portfolios, nominations from teachers, parents, guidance counselors and others in a position to know of a student's abilities and talents. Special attention is focused on students in Title I schools, English Language Learner (ELL) students (often referred by teachers in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program) and students with handicapping conditions (through referrals from regular and special education teachers). In addition, students may share an original product they wish to have considered as a demonstration of outstanding ability or talent. In 2008, Cecil County Public Schools introduced Primary Talent Development in all PreK and K classrooms in order to support a science based instructional model in primary grades. The observational tool used in PTD broadens the identification process and will do so through grade 2 by 2012. Moreover, Cecil County Public Schools is taking a leadership role beginning 2009 in using the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) in order to identify a broad range of students with gifts and talents. In this manner, students not traditionally identified as gifted and talented will be identified as needing specialized gifted education services.

Once information is gathered, a school-based placement committee determines whether gifted education services are needed and, if so, what types of services, and in what subject areas. Some services, such as differentiated instruction through the tiered lesson are provided primarily in the classroom. The classroom teacher works collaboratively with the Challenge Resource Teacher (CRT) and other Resource teachers to plan and implement rigorous instruction. To this end, the collaborative team creates wikispaces, podcasts and video clips to increase professional development exposure and to embed practices through technology, reaching larger audiences. Other services may include cluster grouping, small group activities, independent study, specialized guidance counseling services, mentorships within or outside of school, and extra-curricular activities. Acceleration is also an option for students functioning at very high levels above the grade level classmates.

Each elementary and middle school has a part-time CRT. The middle schools each have a half-time CRT. In 5 of the 17 elementary schools, the Media Specialist also serves as the CRT for a day or a day and a half per week. Two schools have a full-time CRT while half time CRTs serve the other 10 elementary buildings. A countywide resource teacher for Challenge provides support for program implementation to the CRT in each middle/elementary school. A Countywide CRT for High School supports the STEM program in the 6 high schools.

In each building, the CRT meets with classroom teachers, who are working with gifted students in their classrooms daily, to plan extensions of the regular curriculum. In this way, students are working on assignments that address the same outcomes as their peers, using more challenging materials, and working on the alternative assignments instead of, rather than in addition to, the regular assignment. Designing tiered lessons in order to address student readiness is a central push for all classrooms guided by the collaborative CRT team and all resource teachers.

Staff development is ongoing and extensive for CRTs. CRT's work across schools to support each other and embed the best practices in gifted education in the daily work of the classroom. Topics covered in staff development include: an understanding of the characteristics and needs of gifted students and the process of identification, the wide range of gifted students and their diverse needs, observational tools to help enhance everyone's understanding of this broad group of students from PreK through grade 12, the tiered lesson and concept based instruction, management of the differentiated classroom, and early talent identification and the impact on classroom teachers and all stakeholders' perceptions.

Moreover, a wide venue of opportunities for professional development exists: This includes an online course through the County Resource teacher on Identification and Best Practices, evening classes (GALA's) collaboratively taught on best practices that lead to differentiation and inservice training days dedicated to GT practices and collaboration. Challenge teachers register for online courses in Early Talent Development Course, Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties, and they participate in the Maryland Summer Center (MSC) Teachers' Institute.

Finally, a consultant worked with CRT's in 2005 to enable them to use the Parallel Curriculum Model to increase the quality of curriculum taught and to extend the rigor for gifted students. This continues to be part of the focus as CRT's work toward adding an ascending intellectual demand to the curriculum for all students, and they do this, through participation in curriculum writing and the curriculum review process.

**Program** **Educational Technology, Title II, Part D**

**Contact Person** **Earle L. Miller, Jr., Director for Technology Services**

**Program Description** In 2008, the Cecil County Public Schools renewed its current Long-Rang Technology Plan. The Technology Advisory Committee, consisting of CCPS and community members, was responsible for developing the plan, which has been endorsed by our Board of Education and MSDE.

The vision statement for our local plan states:

*“The Cecil County Public Schools is a system where all members of the learning community have equitable access to information technologies that allow them to be proactive, respond positively to change, and be successful, contributing members of a dynamic, information-based, global society. To support the CCPS mission and goals, students, staff, administrators, parents and community members evaluate and apply information effectively using technological resources to learn, manage and communicate. All members of the learning community use technology to facilitate lifelong learning.*

*The use of technology in the Cecil County Public Schools will:*

*enhance student and staff learning through integration into curriculum and instruction;*

*increase student and staff productivity by providing tools, applications and access to information;*

*prepare our students for the 21st century by developing student technology competencies.*

*provide access to technology that is universal and equitable.*

*The Cecil County Public Schools believes that value is derived from the use of technology, not from its presence. Our system will create value by enabling usage and will measure and assess the value we have created by measuring and assessing the usage.”*

Fundamental to the plan is the recognition that technology is not an end in itself. Rather, the primary goal is that improved student learning will be achieved in core educational subject areas and in the technology knowledge and skills critical to our students’ ability to contribute in today’s information technology society. State and local Content Standards and their assessments will serve as both the foundation and the benchmarks for measuring our progress towards improved student learning.

In pursuit of this primary goal, the plan was built around six separate, but interrelated focus areas:

- I. Access to technology will be universal and equitable.
- II. Infrastructure will provide a high bandwidth network connecting all instructional and administrative areas as well as necessary support.
- III. Professional development will be provided to ensure that curriculum, instruction, student learning, and administrative functions will be improved through the effective integration and application of technology.
- IV. Student learning will be improved and enhanced through the seamless and effective integration and application of technology to curriculum and instructional design and delivery.
- V. Management and administration of the school system, schools, and classrooms will be improved in effectiveness and efficiency through integration and application of technology
- VI. Assessment processes will measure the value technology delivers to the Cecil County Public Schools learning community.

These focus areas align with the objectives of the *Maryland Plan for Technology in Education*.

Each focus area consists of specific goal(s), the rationale for the goal(s), measurable targets, and the recommended actions to achieve them. This is followed in each section by a summary of our progress to date, a projected long-range budget, and the assumptions that were used to develop the budget for that focus area.

The plan concludes with an analysis of the costs over five fiscal years. Since the 2006-07 school year, CCPS has operated with a series of overlapping 4 year equipment leases rather than outright purchases of technology. This approach has allowed the system to expand its technology inventory within a constrained budget environment. The expense per year has decreased even while the number of computers for students and staff has increased.

**Program****English Language Acquisition Title III-A****Contact Person****Linda Thomas, ESOL Program Facilitator****Program Description**

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is designed to meet the educational needs of students from other countries enrolled in Cecil County Public Schools for whom English is not a primary language. In addition to these students, the ESOL program includes students born in the United States who have their first contact with English when they enter elementary school. The ESOL program has three primary goals: (1) to increase the English language proficiency of English Language Learners (ELLs) in oral communication, reading, and writing (2) to facilitate the acculturation process, and (3) to assist students in the transition to mainstream classes in order to participate in all aspects of the regular school program. Funding for the ESOL Program is provided by federal and state grants. The Title III grant provides funds for staff development, curriculum writing, student materials, parent outreach, tutoring, technology support, on-site interpretation services and translation of documents.

Parents of all students who enter Cecil County Public Schools complete a “Home Language Survey Form” at registration that is referred to the ESOL Department when English is not the child’s first language. An ESOL teacher contacts the family, sets up a conference and administers the Language Assessment Scales Placement Test. If the student qualifies for ESOL services, the parent signs the permission form for his/her child to enter the Cecil County Public Schools ESOL Program. ELLs receive appropriate instruction in English from an itinerant ESOL teacher who works with students individually or in small groups within the classroom or in the designated ESOL instructional area. High school students attend elective ESOL English classes on a daily basis. Service is determined by the student’s proficiency level in English.

On-going assessment is part of the program and includes daily assignments, unit tests, journals, standardized LAS Benchmark Tests, and the end-of-year state-mandated summative test (LAS Links). Students who successfully meet the state criteria for exiting an ESOL Program are exited and their MSA scores are monitored for two years. High school ELLs are required to pass the HSA tests in order to graduate and are eligible for assistance.

Curriculum  
and  
Instruction

ESOL teachers develop instructional plans based upon the results of the Language Assessment Placement Tests in oral communication, reading, and writing. If the student is identified as a “Beginner,” the ESOL teacher follows the ESOL Beginner Curriculum for grades Pre-K-5 or grades 6-12. The curriculum is divided into five sequential thematic units including essential content, skills and processes, desired results, activities, materials and assessments. Outcomes are based upon indicators from the TESOL National Standards, MD ESOL Standards, Language Arts Content Standards and Technology Standards. If the child is identified as “Limited,” the ESOL teacher selects the appropriate ESOL sequential units for instruction. If the student is identified as “Intermediate”, the ESOL teacher collaborates frequently with the classroom teacher to coordinate lessons and provide instructional support for the content areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies). If the student is identified as “Advanced”, the ESOL teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to support the content areas. Instructional plans include best practices based on current research that address students’ multiple intelligences and learning styles. Teachers utilize a variety of materials including but not limited to the following: bilingual dictionaries, bilingual trade books, and bilingual content area texts, ESL reading series, content support material, guided reading series, grammar texts, software, games and manipulatives. Appropriate strategies include total physical response, language experience approach, guided reading, cooperative learning, dialogue journal writing and problem-solving tasks involving higher level thinking skills

Professional  
Development

During the school year, ESOL teachers provide staff development for teachers, counselors and administrators in small groups, large groups, during team meetings and individual conferences. ESOL teachers provide articles and books, demonstration lessons, inservice programs and workshops. Targeted meetings are held to present the ESOL Beginner Curriculum, the ESOL Program Handbook, and the HELP Handbook for mainstream teachers and the ESOL Guidelines Handbook for administrators. Recent topics for inservice meetings have included appropriate assessment measures, instructional strategies, cultural awareness, and Spanish for mainstream teachers.

In addition, ESOL teachers attend staff development workshops at local, state and national conferences such as the TESOL National Convention, the Maryland TESOL Conference, the Maryland Multicultural Coalition/NAME Conference and SoMIRAC. MSDE provides training for ESOL teachers in administering the LAS Placement Test and LAS Links summative test. ESOL teachers attend technology classes in computer applications for teachers and students offered by the Technology Services Department and the ESOL Department. Recent workshops include United Streaming, Comic Life, Atomic Learning, TransAct Documents, Eduportal, WikiSpaces, Kidspiration, data collection and immigrant rights. Staff development is on-going at monthly ESOL staff meetings and continues on county-wide Professional Days. Finally, ESOL staff members read professional books and discuss concepts and applications. (Classroom Instruction that Works With ELLs, Understanding Your International Students, et. al) Teamwork and collaboration are practiced daily.

Measuring  
Progress

ESOL Teachers deliver instructional services to ELLs two or three times per week except in high school where ESOL English courses are offered every day for elective credit. ESOL Teachers keep very detailed files on each student including an ESOL file and a database of important information and test scores. Students receive both formative and summative assessments in each unit described in the ESOL Curriculum. ESOL Teachers keep a portfolio of each student's work during the school year to ascertain progress in writing. In addition, individual dialogue journals are a part of the writing assessment. An ESOL narrative report or checklist is included with the regular report card unless the student is in high school and receives a regular report card grade for ESOL. Intermediate and advanced students receive assistance with regular classroom assignments and tests.

All ELLs are eligible to receive classroom accommodations on the ESOL Classroom Accommodations form signed by the classroom teacher and the ESOL teacher. Classroom accommodations are given to students to support them in the mainstream classroom and promote confidence and success. Also, these daily accommodations provide the basis for Maryland State Assessment (MSA) accommodations.

Using the data from MSA, Cecil County Public Schools can determine if ELLs have met the annual performance targets set by the Maryland State Department of Education. Furthermore, adequate yearly progress is measured by comparing the scores of ELLs on the LAS Links summative test. The LAS Links results provide a diagnostic tool for planning the individualized program for each ELL enrolled in the CCPS ESOL Program. When students meet the Exit Criteria developed by MSDE, they can be exited from the ESOL Program. Their scores are monitored for two years by MSDE and they are still eligible to receive accommodations on MSA. ESOL teachers continue to monitor their progress for those two years.